

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS, JUN.
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

No. 139. NEW SERIES. SATURDAY, JULY 29, 1871. PRICE TWOPENCE.

CASTAWAY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "WRECKED IN
PORT," &c. &c.

CHAPTER III. JULIET.

MR. PHILIP VANE was up early the next morning, intending to go off to town by the first express train, which left Wexeter soon after nine. He always travelled in first-class carriages and by express trains, always went to first-class hotels, asked for the best rooms, and lived on the most luxurious fare. He was one of those self-indulgent scoundrels, who always found it necessary to make an excuse for the manner in which they pet and pamper themselves. Mr. Philip Vane had a stock of these excuses, which he had used so long and so frequently, that he actually began to believe in them. Thus, in regard to his travelling, he was in the habit of saying that time was money, that it was important for him to waste as little as possible of the day upon the road, and that, travelling by express, he was enabled to transact business up to the last minute at the town which he was leaving, and to be ready to commence afresh, the instant he arrived at his destination. Also in regard to his selection of the best hotels and his luxurious habits generally, he would remark that as he depended entirely upon his own exertions for his income, it was necessary that he should keep himself in good condition, and obviate as far as possible the ill effects of the constant mental strain, by attention to his bodily comforts.

Listening to this style of conversation, one would have imagined that Mr. Vane was a professional man in large practice, a busy merchant, or a gentleman holding in his own hands the control of several large estates; instead of being, as he was, a very

common sharper, living on his wits. On those very rare occasions, when he permitted any of his more intimate associates to think that he was taking them into his confidence, he would speak of himself as "a kind of modern Ishmael, sir; a sort of fellow whose hand has been against every man, and who consequently has had every man's hand against him, but who has managed to get on tolerably notwithstanding!"

Those assertions, like most others emanating from the same source, were wholly and entirely false. Mr. Philip Vane's hand, instead of having been raised against every man, had generally passed its time in patting the shoulder, or gently insinuating itself under the arm of every man from whom he thought he could reap the smallest benefit. All things to all men was Mr. Philip Vane; specious, sly, frank, cunning, outspoken, reticent, just as suited the occasion. This hazy comparison of himself with Ishmael arose from the fact that he had never enjoyed the advantage of parental rearing. His earliest recollections were of the preparatory school in the suburbs of London, where, smallest among the small denizens of that little world, too small even to be placed in the lowest class, he roamed about the house and garden, and learned his alphabet from some elder pupil inclined to gratify his dignity by teaching him. There he remained for some years until old enough to be removed to a grammar school. Previous to this removal, he, for the first time, experienced that greatest of all delights of a schoolboy, the charm of "going home."

Home, as realised by little Vane, was a large house in a fashionable square in Brighton, belonging, as the child understood, to his uncle, his father's brother, a

leading physician of the place. Doctor Vane Philip remembered as a quiet little man with white hair and a thoughtful face, who used to pat the boy's head, and surreptitiously give him half-crowns—surreptitiously, that is to say, as far as concerned Mrs. Vane, a full-blown handsome woman, whom Philip always remembered with flowers in her cap, and a very red complexion. From the first, Philip had a dim, childish notion that the doctor was afraid of Mrs. Vane, whom, as the child learned in the course of time, he had married when a widow, and who had two sons, one with very large whiskers, and the other with a black and white dog. When the child came back for the next holidays, he learned that the dog-owning son had gone to Spain, which was a long way off, as he understood, to fight for something or somebody not clearly defined; but the other son with the whiskers was still there, and took Philip up to his bedroom, which was at the top of the house, and made him very sick by insisting upon his smoking a pipe, a proceeding which seemed fraught with great delight to the whiskered gentleman. When Philip came home six months afterwards, at Christmas, he found the house in sad tribulation, for the son with the dog was dead, and the son with the whiskers had gone to Australia, not, as the boy gathered from the talk among the servants and the visitors to the house, without having distinguished himself by squandering a vast amount of money and running very deeply into debt. The doctor, Philip noticed, was thinner, whiter, and more thoughtful than ever; and though Mrs. Vane wore as many flowers in her cap, she seemed to have dropped suddenly into an old woman, and shed her teeth as he had heard of deer shedding their horns, while her fresh complexion was, he noticed, muddled and streaky.

The boy never saw his uncle alive again; he was sent home from school to attend the funeral, and formed one of a very small procession, which, in the roaring wind and drifting rain, struggled up one of the back streets of the town to the little evangelical chapel, at which, at his wife's command, the kindly old doctor had given regular attendance, and in the burying-ground attached to which his remains were laid. After the ceremony the little funeral party broke up, the well-known yellow carriage of the physician who had paid the last respects to his old friend, stood at the churchyard gate, ready to bear him off on

his round of visits; an old school friend of the deceased, who had come down from town, jumped into a cab to catch the return train, and Philip and the lawyer got into the mourning-coach to return together. On their way back the lawyer told the boy that Mrs. Vane was not well enough to see him, but that he was to go back to school that evening as soon as he had had his dinner; then, to Philip's great wonderment, asked him whether he had read Robinson Crusoe and Philip Quarll, and whether he did not think he should like to be a great traveller like those heroes. The meaning of these questions was explained a few days afterwards, when the schoolmaster called him into the apartment which was alternately a reception-room and a torture-chamber, and instead of, as the boy expected, bidding him prepare for immediate punishment, told him that he was to leave school the next day for Plymouth, where his passage had been taken in one of the steamers immediately starting for the West Indies, he having been bound apprentice to a cousin of Mrs. Vane's, who was a merchant and planter in the island of St. Vincent.

Philip Vane went to Plymouth, and to the West Indies, but not to St. Vincent. Indeed, he carefully avoided that island, having, while on board the royal mail steamer Shannon, made the acquaintance of several young gentlemen who were going out to join Her Majesty's land forces, then quartered at Jamaica; and by whose aid the lad, quick at games of skill and lucky at games of chance, turned the fifty pounds, with which he had been presented by Mrs. Vane's agent on sailing, into a sum worth four times the original amount. For two or three years he remained in the colonies enjoying the hospitality invariably extended there to every one who makes himself agreeable, living at the different messes, riding races for the officers, staying with the merchants at their up-country villas, and providing himself with pocket-money by bold and lucky card-playing. By the time that the desire to return to his native country became too strong to be denied, Mr. Philip Vane had mixed so much with the military, and was so thoroughly conversant with their manners and customs, that, on his arrival in England, he deemed it expedient to announce himself as Captain Vane. It was as Captain Vane, ostensibly fly-fishing for his amusement at Chepstow, but in reality hiding from the officers of the sheriff of Monmouth, acting in conjunction with their brother officers of Middlesex, that he made the

acquaintance of Miss Pierpoint, who at the time was acting in that ancient town. His intentions toward that young lady were at first strictly dishonourable, but finding that she was not to be won by anything short of the marriage ceremony, and believing that he saw in the development of her talent the foundation of a future income for himself, he honoured her by making her his wife. Captains becoming somewhat common, he gave himself a kind of billiard-room brevet, and appeared as Major Vane, under which title he was favourably known in a shady fifth-rate little club, composed of adventurers like himself, and their victims, calling itself by the high-sounding name of the Craven, and locating itself in a dingy little street in the neighbourhood of Piccadilly: had his presence "remarked" by the reporters of sporting newspapers as a regular attendant at the principal turf meetings, and led that odd sort of flashy, swindling, disreputable existence which has so many votaries in the present day. Though two years had passed since his marriage, he had never introduced his wife to any one, and had insisted upon her keeping their connexion secret, even from the little sister who was her sole relative. From time to time he appeared at places where she was acting, as he had just appeared at Wexeter, giving her the benefit of his society sometimes for a longer, sometimes for a shorter period, but invariably insisting, whether present or not, on receiving two-thirds of the salary which she earned by her exertions, and leaving her and her sister to subsist on the remainder.

Had the salary thus earned been tolerably large, it is not improbable that Major Vane's conjugal attentions might have been greater than they actually were, but the major confessed to himself that his matrimonial speculation, as a speculation, had been a failure. In confidential communication with himself, the major did not scruple to own that he had not much regard for his wife. Even when he perpetrated marriage, it was from the commercial aspect that he regarded the step, and from that point of view it had been a decided failure. It ought to have turned out right; he himself could check off a score of instances in which worthy gentlemen, friends of his own, were deriving large sums from the theatrical earnings of ladies who were their acknowledged or unacknowledged partners: but these ladies were spirited persons, with little clothing and less grammar, whose portraits were in the photographers' windows, and

whose Christian names, affectionately diminished, were in the mouths of London generally.

More than once he had suggested to his wife that an equally glorious career lay before her if she only chose to embrace the opportunity and accept an engagement which, without his connexion with her being at all known, he could procure for her, but she invariably shook her head and refused, remaining at Wexeter, or some such dreary place, "doing her spouting," as he pleasantly but ironically called it, for a salary of three pounds a week and a benefit, which did not realise more than forty pounds.

Major Vane, however, was a philosopher. His marriage had been a mistake; he owned it to himself, but to no one else. And by the time that he had descended to the coffee-room to breakfast on the morning after the meeting in the lane behind the turnpike, he had thoroughly determined on ridding himself of the connexion at the first available opportunity. Meantime, he should receive the money for the benefit and the two-thirds of the week's salary, and when an opportunity offered itself, he should grasp it, and Miss Pierpoint would hear of him no more.

While the omnibus containing this large-souled gentleman was moving towards the railway station, Miss Pierpoint emerged from her lodging and made the best of her way towards the theatre. It was very early for a rehearsal, even at such an unconventional theatre as that of Wexeter, but with a view to see whether she could not make some effect in other than merely "spouting" parts, and thus please her husband, Miss Pierpoint had determined on playing for her benefit the part of Phoebe in *Paul Pry*, one of those waiting-maids known only to the stage, who carry their hands in the pockets of their little black silk aprons, who are the chosen recipients of their young mistresses' secrets, and the terror of the lives of the elderly gentlemen, their masters. Phoebe has songs to sing, and the leader of the band, who like every other person in the theatre would have done anything for Miss Pierpoint, was coming early to try them over with her; Phoebe has a certain amount of interchange of repartee with the principal character, and the low comedian, whose notion of repartee consisted in making faces at the gallery, and whose "dry humour," so often lauded, resolved itself into forgetting his part, and substituting the slang sayings of the day, was coming to "go through

their scenes." After that there was a full rehearsal of *Romeo and Juliet*, which was to be the leading piece on the benefit evening, so that it was tolerably late in the day before Miss Pierrepont's work was over.

Just as she was moving toward the stage-door, she felt her arm touched, and a low voice said in her ear:

"Won't you speak to me?"

Turning round she saw Gerald Hardinge; he was dressed in his working garb, a loose canvas jacket and trousers, spotted here and there with great daubs of paint.

"Mr. Hardinge!" she cried, putting out her hand.

"No," he said, drawing back, "I cannot shake hands with you now; I have been at work and have not had time to wash the traces of it off. I looked down from the 'flies' and saw you were going away, so hurried down to stop you, as I have something to say to you."

"I am very glad you did; I was sorry to have missed you last night——"

"Yes," interrupted the young man, "but we cannot talk here in this passage with the wind blowing in, and old Gonnop listening to every word. Come down on to the stage, there is no one there now, and we can have it all to ourselves."

She turned back, and passing through the littered mass of disused scenery stacked up against the walls, they went down on to the stage, now but very partially illumined by a faint gleam of light, coming through the window at the back of the distant gallery. For a minute neither of them spoke, then Miss Pierrepont said:

"What has kept you at work so late to-day, Mr. Hardinge? I have heard of no new piece in preparation."

"No," he said, "there is nothing new, only I think it would be a disgrace to the theatre if we put on that worn and ragged old pair of flats for the garden scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, and I persuaded old Potts to let me touch it up afresh."

"Was it only for the credit of the theatre that you did that?" asked Madge, looking softly at him.

"Well, no, perhaps not," he said. "I dare say I should not have done it if it had been Miss Delamere's benefit, or if Miss Montmorency had been playing *Juliet*. You know well enough why I did it."

"You are a kind, good boy, Gerald," said Miss Pierrepont, softly laying her hand on his arm, "and never mind giving up your time, or taking trouble for me."

"Kind, good boy, am I?" said he,

petulantly; "it is very little I am able to do, but even that don't meet with much return."

"Gerald!" said Miss Pierrepont, "what do you mean?"

"Where were you last night?" asked he, turning suddenly on her; "where did you go to after you had finished here?"

"You have not the slightest right to ask me that question at all, Mr. Hardinge," said Miss Pierrepont, drawing herself up and looking straight at him, "and certainly not to ask it in that tone."

"I know I have no right," interrupted Gerald.

"But as I have no reason to be ashamed of what I did," continued Miss Pierrepont, without heeding him, "I do not mind telling you that I went to meet a person on important private business of my own."

"And you did not get back until nearly midnight," said Gerald.

"How do you know that?"

"How do I know it? Because I saw you return. I walked up and down the street in front of your door, from the time Rose told me you were out, until I saw you safe once more within the house."

"What, were you there during all that terrible storm?" asked Miss Pierrepont.

"Yes, I was! I did not mind that; there was far too great a storm going on within my breast for me to pay much attention to the thunder and lightning; I thought, perhaps, you had gone to meet some man, and I was nearly mad."

"My poor boy," said Madge, soothingly.

"Oh, Madge! Madge! if you only knew what I suffer through jealousy; all this morning I have been like a lunatic, looking down on to the stage, and seeing that old Boodle make love to you at rehearsal."

"But Mr. Boodle plays *Romeo*, Gerald!"

"Yes, I know all about that; of course he must do it; and he is fifty years old, and wears a wig and false teeth, but still I hate to see him or any one else come near you, or touch you."

"But why are you so jealous, Gerald?"

"Why? Because I love you. You know it, Madge, you know this, you are certain of it, and yet you ask me why I am jealous."

"Yes, Gerald," she said, in a low voice, her hand again falling softly on his arm, "I think you are fond of me; you have shown that you are, indeed, more than once."

"No, I have not!" he burst out; "I have no chance or opportunity of doing so! I only want to prove to you how much I love you! I hate the life you are leading,

and I want to take you away from it—I hate to see you stared at by a lot of senseless gabies, who think they are patronising you by clapping their hands and thumping their infernal umbrellas. I hate to see these brutes of officers—we shall have them all here on Friday night, I suppose—haw-hawing about the passages, and talking of you in their idiotic manner. I want to take you out of all this, I want to marry you and make you mine, and mine alone!”

“To marry me!” she said with a very sad smile; “you forget, Gerald, that I am six years older than you, and that I shall be an old woman——”

“I knew you would say that! I hate it; you shouldn’t say that,” he broke out, impetuously. “How many hundreds of men are there who have married women older than themselves, and lived perfectly happy lives! You make yourself older than you are by the hard work you do. I want to work for you, to slave for you, to make money that you may share it, to make a name that you may be proud of me, and I will do it yet. I am not always going to remain a drudge in a country theatre; I shall get the chance some day, and then, oh, Madge! how proud I shall be of you as my wife!”

“You are a foolish boy,” she said, bending her deep hazel eyes full upon him, “and must not talk to me in this way.”

“No,” he said, curling his lip and shrugging his shoulders, “such talk is idle now, I know; I know I have nothing to offer now. If I ever had the chance of attaining a position I would ask you to marry me, for then the knowledge that I was fighting for you would nerve me in the struggle, and you would not say ‘No’ to me then, would you, Madge?”

“You shall ask me when the chance arrives, Gerald,” said the girl in a low tone, “and I will answer you then.”

“That time may be nearer than you imagine,” said the young man. “Now, you have had a long day, and will have to begin again shortly, let me see you to your home.”

It was Miss Pierrepont’s custom to lie down on her bed for an hour every afternoon before proceeding to the theatre, and thus prepare herself for the exertions of the evening. Visitors were refused admittance, perfect quiet reigned throughout the house, and Rose Pierrepont sat in the drawing-room with the door open, ready to rush out and scare away any chance irruption of cackling poultry, barking dogs, or

grinding organ men. On this day, however, though the house was as quiet and Rose as vigilant as ever, Madge Pierrepont could not sleep. She lay outside the bed, her long brown hair unloosed, hastily combed off her face and floating over her shoulders, her head resting on her hand, and an odd, wild gleam in her brown eyes.

“How wonderful,” she said to herself, “how wonderful that Gerald should choose to-day, of all days in the year, to say what he just said to me. I knew that he was fond of me, of course, I could not help knowing it, but he had never spoken so plainly as he did just now. What a contrast between what I heard last night and what I heard to-day! Philip grumbling at me for not making more money, grumbling at the sum, little enough but hardly earned, which I am able to send to him, dissatisfied because I have none of those accomplishments which, as he seems to think, alone go down with a London audience! And then this boy, hating the mere fact of my being compelled to appear in public, writhing under the notion that my name is bandied about in men’s mouths, and that I am a subject of discussion, however complimentary; anxious only to give me rest, and quite contented, as he says, to slave for me, and desirous only of fame that I may share it with him! And Philip tells me he ‘trusts me,’ and bids me dally with the boy’s affection, and see how much money can be made out of him! To that baseness I will not stoop! I will put an end to this nonsense altogether, I will no longer listen to—and yet how wonderfully soft and tender his manner is! Heaven knows my life is hard enough, a grinding servitude with only this one gleam of affection to light it up! And that I will not deny myself. No! the chance that Gerald talks of will never come. He will weary of me as Philip has wearied! Meanwhile, until he does so weary, I will not deprive myself of his society—no, nor of his worship—the only sunshine in my life!”

A BOOK FOR BRIDES.

I COULD fill, in a few minutes, an imperial bushel with French books specially and directly treating of marriage; the volumes discoursing of it indirectly are as numerous as the grains of wheat in an incalculable assemblage of imperial bushels. The majority of these, as far as I know them, are melancholy-inspiring works, sad to the heart, and repulsive to the moral feeling

of all who hope for elevation in human nature. I have fallen upon one,* however, which might be translated with advantage, for the perusal of English-speaking maidens.

It opens with the betrothal, a ceremony which, amongst civilised and Christian peoples, has dwindled down to a few consultations between families (even when it amounts to that), and a few words exchanged by the future husband and wife. But the Bible tells us how seriously it was regarded by the Hebrews, and to what an extent it bound the contracting parties. Breaches of promise of marriage, except for good and valid reasons, were things unheard of. The Israelites, faithful to their traditions, practise at the present day the ceremony of betrothal with the same solemnity as in olden time; or at least, if they do not take to the synagogue the very same presents that Joseph and Mary carried to the Temple, they still make their offering by breaking a vase before the altar.

To mark the importance and validity of a betrothal, the Council of Trent declared clandestine betrothals to be null and void. It required them to be celebrated before the curé, in the presence of two or three witnesses at least. Greater weight was afterwards given to this article by an ordonnance of Louis the Thirteenth, which forbade any notary (that is, any civilian) to sanction or receive any promise of the kind. Before the first French Revolution, such was the importance attached to this pious custom, that, except with an express dispensation from the bishop, a priest could not betroth and marry a young couple in the same day. It was requisite that a certain lapse of time, as a test of their fidelity, should intervene between the one ceremony and the other. The old French canon law had provided for the case in which a faithless fiancé should marry any other than his betrothed bride. The marriage, consecrated by a sacrament, was more binding than the simple engagement of betrothal; but if the culprit became a widower, and his first love required it of him, he was obliged to purge his guilt by taking her to wife.

The pervading thought of *Le Livre des Fiancées* is that Love and Duty are brothers, and not enemies. The great secret is, not to separate them. To those who love, everything becomes easy and agreeable. Our authors think they have dis-

covered the means of preventing married love from flying away. If that be true, their book may fairly claim to be called the Book of Happiness. Let the reader judge of its quality.

Before marriage there is unclouded sunshine. The young woman, adorned with the charms of her spring-tide, is kind and artless; she is careful not to err in her slightest actions. A good and provident genius, her mother, is always at hand to watch her movements, divine her thoughts, and to rectify whatever might tend to lead her astray.

The young man, captivated by those pleasing qualities which are heightened by his own enthusiastic imagination, ardently longs for the blissful moment when so charming a companion shall become his own. He loves, he hopes, he does his very utmost to please. Any defects he may have, like those of his fair one, are completely hidden. Each party is enchanted with the other.

Fear, then, the inevitable moment when illusions shall be dissipated, and commonplace daylight succeed to the hues of the prism. Meet it rather by preparing the means of avoiding successive falls from deception to deception. The ideal flowers which embalm the soul frequently fade for want of proper culture.

In the first place, fair readers, in order that unchanging love may take possession of your hearts and gain your husbands', you must trample underfoot the paltry ambition which has undone many charming women, who otherwise would have been adored, namely, the spirit of mastery.

To fulfil one's duties properly, it is necessary, above all, to know them thoroughly, and then to lay down a strict rule to oneself never to fail in their observance. Weak people are frightened at such a notion, and weak people suffer the consequences. A rare merit, for example, is to take a strict account of one's exact position, and then to conform oneself to it. How many young wives have created for themselves deception after deception, for want of having had the good sense to accept cheerfully certain rules laid down by their husbands! Which brings us back to the relative positions of husband and wife.

Civil and religious laws, which are not the work of arbitrary caprice but the consequence of the laws of nature, require that the wife should be obedient to her husband. She undertakes, in France, a solemn engagement, both before the magistrate and

* *Le Livre des Fiancées*, by Octave Féfé and Vallentin.

before the minister of God. Twice she makes that promise on oath. No constraint is put upon her. Up to the last moment she has only to say "No," and the marriage does not take place—of which there are not infrequent instances. Why, then, should she revolt against this authority, thus freely accepted? Remain single, mademoiselle, if you have no inclination for the duties imposed on a wife. Many brides, while promising obedience, make a sort of mental reservation, which is equally offensive to honesty and to good sense. In all times, and in all countries, a chief is absolutely necessary. Attachment to a worthy prince thus becomes a virtue, because his person represents the country, which is the image of the common interest. In a family, which constitutes a little state, a chief is equally requisite. That chief is the husband; and all the members of the family owe him respect, submission, devotion.

Never persist in useless discussions with your husband. Should such begin, remember J. P. Richter's saying, "Many men resemble glass, which is smooth and inoffensive so long as it is unbroken; but which, once broken, cuts and pierces with every edge and angle." Doubtless, there are moments when it is difficult to restrain oneself—which increases the merit of self-command. By repressing any utterance of displeasure or acerbity, you will be better able to have a satisfactory explanation with your husband. There is great art in choosing the propitious moment. Remember, also, the words of Daniel Stern, "The vulgar complain of being hated, calumniated, or rejoice at being cherished, beloved. The wise man cares less about the sentiments he inspires, than about those he feels. He knows that what is really bitter and painful is, not to be hated, but to hate; that what is pleasant, noble, and great, is, not to be loved, but to love."

To sustain love a long time and transform it eventually into a warm and lasting friendship, it is requisite to keep one's heart above all weakness. The first thing is to inspire esteem; and esteem is not heedlessly bestowed, but must be won by an irreproachable conduct. Nor does this solid quality alone suffice; the form must be added to the substance; that is, you must be at the same time estimable and attractive. In the efforts you make with that intention, remember that "a woman has often more wrinkles in her temper than on her face."

It is not so easy as young wives imagine

to keep their husbands within household bounds. That is to say, those gentlemen often feel the wish to seek amusement elsewhere without their spouses. It is hanging matter; but it happens only too frequently. Recollect that men, by marrying, renounce their most valuable possession—or, at least, what they consider such—namely, their liberty. Eh bien! women in general hardly appreciate the sacrifice sufficiently, and refuse to believe that their condition is at all changed in that respect. Nevertheless, you cannot help allowing that if men, by marrying, give up their liberty, your sex on the contrary (in France) gets married for the sake of acquiring more liberty. In exchange for this liberty which he valued so highly, a man expects some different kind of satisfaction. If he does not find it at home, he seeks compensating pleasures elsewhere. From that day the wife's existence is embittered. Her heart is full; and a brimful heart is as hard to carry as a brimful cup. The slightest shock causes it to overflow.

Whenever your husband returns to his home, invariably receive him with a pleasant smile. Accost him with warm and open cheerfulness; let your countenance express the delight you feel at seeing him again; let a day's absence appear, for you, as if it were a separation of a quarter of a century. It is the surest way to make him cheerful in return. Do not take the trouble to examine whether his countenance be anxious or no; above all, not to inquire whether he be good or ill tempered at the moment; drive from your thoughts the idea of ascertaining whether he is disposed to make himself agreeable; but display instinctively your expansive affection, and contrive cleverly to chase any dark clouds from his mind, if your warm reception has not sufficed to do so. Accustom yourself to address your husband with such frankness that he must see your soul is on your lips. Do we not all feel a natural sympathy for countenances which beam with cheerfulness?

If you say to yourself, "To-day I mean to be happy," it is a rash promise, a hasty project. But if you say, "To-day I mean to give some one pleasure," it is an amiable intention, which will rarely deceive your hopes. Such conduct is generous and delicate in the extreme, and cannot fail to bear good fruit. Delicacy, moreover, is the combined expression of the best qualities of the head and the heart. "The first fault committed by

married people," says Madame de Puisieux, "is the want of sufficient mutual respect and deference."

Observe, therefore, great consideration and deference for your husband's tastes and opinions. Such proofs of affection will both touch his heart and flatter his self-esteem. To have even the air of doubting your husband's judgment, capacity, and ability, will not only offend his allowable confidence in his own opinions, it does worse; it makes him suspect that your confiding love for him has ceased. Have we not enormous faith in those whom we really love? And do we not stand up for their personal merit as much as, or more than, we would for our own? Love forgiveth all things, hopeth all things.

Never lose sight of the principle that your duties to your husband ought to take precedence of all other duties. Let no excuse or pretext induce you to fail in them. Better, a hundred times better, to sacrifice every acquaintance, every friend, than to sacrifice one's own dear husband.

Carefully avoid appearing to despise your husband's friends. If you perceive that they are insincere, warn him of the fact with great precaution. If you believe it contrary to your interest that he should continue to frequent them, take great pains not to offend his self-esteem by the measures you adopt to wean him from them. It is a great humiliation to be obliged to confess that one has set one's affections on unworthy persons. If you can lead him to make the discovery himself, your object will be gained, with offence to no one.

Never strive to have the last word. Say what you want to say, and then change the conversation with tact and cheerfulness. The reverse of this too often takes place. A witty Englishman pleasantly remarked, "Two sets of men attempt a labour in vain. The first set try to have the last word with their wives. The second set, after they have had it, try to make them own that they have been in the wrong."

There are topics which must not be neglected because they are far from pleasant to treat of; amongst these is jealousy. Jealousy is the sister of Love, as Satan is the brother of the angels. Weep with love, but never with jealousy. Cold rains do not produce beautiful flowers.

To manifest the desire of possessing, to the exclusion of all other women, your

husband's affections; to display affectionate confidence, boundless devotion, and a preference for him above all other men, is no more natural than honourable. Such conduct inspires, and merits, a complete reciprocity of love. But to take offence, to become suspicious, and give way to ill humour, is to render oneself at once unjust and ridiculous. Coarse and violent jealousy is mistrust of the beloved object; subdued and smothered jealousy is mistrust to oneself. "Suspicion," says J. P. Richter, "is the base coin of truth." "When love turns jealous," says M. Müller, "he has a hundred eyes like Argus, but not two of his hundred eyes see clear." If your husband makes himself agreeable in society, and you impute it to him as a crime; if, on returning home, you pout, sulk, and treat him coldly, the consequence will be to make you insupportable, and you will pay dear for it before very long.

Domestic happiness is a work of patience; its continuance depends on moderation and prudence. It is only slowly and by degrees that we reach the summit of the ladder, whilst one false step suffices to precipitate us from the top to the bottom. It is certainly strange that, for years, young people are taught their grammar, "to enable them to speak and write correctly;" but no one has yet compiled a grammar, within the reach of ordinary capacities, to help them to lead a happy life. The *Livre des Fiancées* makes the attempt, relying mainly on the conjugation of the verb *aimer*, to love.

One thing which people do not always manage to avoid in a new-established household is monotony. It is, nevertheless, possible to combat this dangerous enemy, who has furnished the subject of unnumbered jokes, amongst which "toujours perdrix" stands conspicuous. A grand resource is to acquire a good store of conversation, to be augmented continually by reading and reflection. The quality called "esprit" by the French—cleverness, intellect, mental vigour, wit—is certainly improved by practice, quite as much as piano-playing is. The woman who exercises her conversational powers, polishing and repolishing them day by day, takes the sure steps to arrive at perfection. It will greatly help her, if she can lay down clear ideas and fixed principles respecting certain subjects. She can then speak of them lucidly and decidedly, which will not prevent her adopting a modest tone, and will also bring into greater relief the caution she will exercise, in giving

her opinion on questions she has not yet fathomed.

Practice, which produces the sharp debater, also makes the ready converser. It also gives the presence of mind which enables the exercise of repartee, and the faculty of parrying inconvenient observations in a manner which shall be amusing instead of offensive. Often, in the course of their lives, have women need of this useful power, of which men are so proud, when they possess it. And it really is no trifling advantage to be able to decide instantaneously, under difficult circumstances, what is best to say or do.

Young married women must expect their trials. There is no concealing the fact that men are not always perfect. They have their faults, like—everybody else. One of the worst is giving way to passion; and the great danger of this failing is that it tends to go on increasing; in which case, it would ruin the happiness of the household. If your husband unfortunately be so inclined, endeavour to check him at the very outset. A sensible woman has her arms ready at hand—amiability, gentleness, persuasion. Inspire your husband, whatever be his temper, with confidence, and, above all, with esteem and affection, and you will exercise over him a powerful influence. But beware of letting it appear that you are proud, or even conscious of that influence. The slightest symptom of such a feeling would inevitably offend your husband. The merest trifle would shake your empire. Moreover, by ignoring the authority of the head of the family, you make your husband ridiculous and lower your own consideration.

After the charms of your pretty person, what, think you, were the qualities which attracted your husband? Were they not the favourable opinion he conceived of your good management, your economy, the orderly life you led, your fondness for home? Henceforth and immediately let your actions prove that if you practised those virtues under your parents' eyes, it was because they were intimately bound up with your nature. It follows that a young wife's first care should be to render her home agreeable. Let her apartments be kept in perfect neatness, with order in the slightest minutiae, and abundant taste. When the eyes are flattered, the imagination easily yields to the charm. Let her also remember that simplicity is the coquetry of good taste.

If the poetic aspect of the household

offers great seductions, the material details of life must not be neglected; and to attend to these properly, great patience is often requisite. The most reasonable of men—pity they should—have their moments of irritation. The wife ought to keep to herself all the worries and troubles that spring from cooks, domestics, and seamstresses. All the husband wants is the result, which the wife will render as satisfactory as possible without disturbing his mind by recounting at length the difficulties she has had in accomplishing the feat.

Time has two wings, with one of which he wipes our tears, and with the other sweeps away our joys. Keep that second wing at a distance as long as you can. Happiness also has wings; and he is a bird who, having once taken flight, seldom perches twice on the same branch.

After this pretty little allegory we take leave of our Book for Brides, which contains a good deal of common sense, although it will not commend itself greatly to the strong-minded sisterhood.

OUR STUDIO IN THE WEST INDIES.

I "ROOM" with Napoleón Rodriguez y Boldú. We are both "followers of the divine art of Apelles"—at least so the local papers describe us—and we have pitched our tent in a Cuban town. Our tent is a Roman-tiled dwelling, consisting of six rooms on a single floor, with a wide balcony in front, and a spacious patio, or courtyard, at the back. We have no furniture worth mentioning; furniture in Cuba being represented by a few cane or leather-bottomed chairs, some spittoons, and a small square of carpet. But our walls are well hung with works of art in various stages of progress, which, in a great measure, compensate for the otherwise barren appearance of our apartments. Our studio is a spacious chamber on a level with the street which it overlooks. The windows occupy more than half of the wall space, are guiltless of glass, and are protected by iron bars. The accessories of our strange calling lend an interest to our domestic arrangements, and form a kind of free entertainment for the vulgar. To insure privacy, we have sometimes curtained the lower half of our enormous windows; but this contrivance has always proved ineffectual, for in the midst of our labour, the space above the curtains has been gradu-

ally eclipsed by the appearance of certain playful blacks who have clambered to the heights by means of the accommodating rails. Gentlemen of colour have little respect for the polite arts; they look upon our sanctum as a sort of permanent peep-show, and upon us as a superior order of photographers. Primed with these delusions our Spanish Sambo comes for his *carte-de-visite* at all hours of the sunny day, persuaded that we undertake black physiognomies at four dollars a dozen; and when we assure him that ours is the legitimate colouring business, and that we have no connexion with *Señor Collodión* up the street, our swarthy patron produces a ready-made black and white miniature of himself, and commissions us to colour it in our best manner.

My companion has a weakness for bird-painting, and it pleases him to have the living originals on the premises. Therefore does our spacious court-yard contain a goodly collection of the feathered tribe, with one or two animals without feathers. A large wirework aviary is filled with fifty specimens of tropical birds with pretty plumage and names hard to pronounce. A couple of *cocos*—a species of stork, with clipped wings—run freely about the yard, in company with a wild owl and a grulla, a tall crane-like bird five feet high. In a tank of water are a pair of young caymanes, or crocodiles. These interesting creatures are still in their infancy, and at present measure only four feet six inches, from the tips of their hard noses to the points of their flexible tails. We have done our best to tame them; but they have not yet fallen into our domestic ways. Nor does time improve their vicious natures, for at the tender age of six months they have already shown signs of insubordination. If they persist in their evil courses, we must needs make a premature end of them, which is no easy matter, for their scaly hides are already tough as leather, and the only indefensible parts about them are their small eyes and open mouths. The *cocos*, male and female, are meagre-bodied birds with slender legs, and beaks twelve inches long. They are an inseparable couple, and wander about our patio and rooms in a restless, nervous fashion; rattling their chop-stick noses into everything. Now they are diving into the mould of flower-pots for live food, which they will never swallow till it has been previously slain. One of them has spied a cockroach in a corner, and in darting towards the prey a

scorpion crosses its path. The venomous reptile hugs the belligerent beak in the hope of conveying to it some of its deadly sting; but the tip of *Coco's* horny appendage is a long way from his tender points, and *Scorpio* must travel many an inch before he can make the desired impression. Meanwhile the stork has teased *Scorpio's* life out, and jerked his remains into that bourn whence no defunct reptile returns. Our *coco's* chief delight is to play with our painting materials, where much amusement may be derived by upsetting a bottle of varnish, or by distributing our long brushes in various parts of the room.

The tall grulla struts about with a stately step, and her ways form an interesting study. At night she is as serviceable as the best watch-dog, warning all trespassers by her piercing shriek, and by a furious dash at them with her strong neck and sharp-pointed beak. Grulla abominates all new-comers, and it was long before she was reconciled to the presence of her crocodile companions. When first their objectionable society was thrust upon the huge bird, she became nearly beside herself with vexation, and made savage onslaughts on the invaders' impenetrable hides. Once Grulla was in imminent danger of losing her neck whilst taking a blind header at the enemy's beady eye; for in a moment the reptile opened his yard of jaw for the easy accommodation of the bird's three feet of throat. My lady's behaviour at table leaves nothing to be desired. At the dinner hour she strides into our apartment without bidding, and takes her allotted place. The bird's two feet six inches of legs serve her instead of a chair, and her swan-like neck enables her to take a bird's-eye view of the most distant dish. But she never ventures to help herself to anything till the meal is actually placed on the plate before her; nor does she bolt her food like a beast, but disposes of it gracefully like the best educated biped. Jerking the article for consumption neatly into her beak, and raising her head high in the air, she waits till the comestible has gravitated naturally down her throat. The grulla's favourite dishes are sweet bananas, boiled pumpkin, and the crumb of new bread; but she is also partial to fresh raw beefsteak whenever she can get it. More than once have Grulla and her feathered companions formed subjects for fancy pictures by my artist partner. But productions like these have no attractions for the Cuban picture buyer, whose pictorial requirements are in-

deed rarely connected with the legitimate in art.

Assuredly high art does not pay in our part of the tropics, as we find after giving it a fair trial. Regardless of posterity, therefore, we abandon this branch of our avocation, and offer our art services for anything that may present itself. A *bonâ fide* painter is a rarity in the town I am describing, so *Napoléon* and I are comparatively alone in the fine art field. Our patrons are numerous, but we are expected by them to be as versatile as the "general utility" of theatrical life.

Most of our portrait work is connected with defunct people, for we cannot induce our patrons to believe that a living person is a fit subject for our brush. And so it often happens that we are summoned from our homes, doctor-like, at all hours of the night, to hasten to the house of a moribund, for the purpose of making such notes as shall afterwards serve as guides for a replica of the late lamented in his habit as he lived.

Happily, portraiture is not our only resource. We hold important professorships in colleges, schools, and ladies' academies, where we impart every accomplishment in which drawing-paper and pencils are used, including the art of calligraphy, missal-painting, and designing for fancy needlework.

Whenever a strolling company of Spanish players encamp for the season at the theatre, our services are required as the company's special scenic artists. The demand for scenery at the *Teatro Real Cuba* is, however, small; a divergence from its standard repertoire being considered as next to an infringement on public rights; so our labours rarely extend beyond an occasional property, or "set" in the shape of a painted "ancestor," a practicable piece of furniture, or a bit of bank for introduction into the elegant saloon, the cottage interior, or the wood scene. Once only are our scenic services in special request for a fairy piece, which the manager has announced with "entirely new decorations." Though the public believe that four months have been employed in the preparations, we have barely as many days for the purpose, and during this short space we produce that gorgeous temple which is destined to form a conspicuous feature in the well-worn wood scene, and we add to the native charm of the elegant saloon and the cottage interior with suitable embellishments. Dutch metal and coloured

foils, lavishly administered, cover a multitude of imperfections, and we have still the red fire and an indulgent public to fall back upon. Our efforts are rewarded by thunders of applause on the part of the audience, and eulogistic paragraphs in the local papers.

Upon another occasion we are required to adorn the principal thoroughfares in the town in honour of his excellency the captain-general, who is expected to visit us on his way to the *Havannah*. All the native talent is summoned to our standard, and helps us to disguise the streets through which his excellency is to pass. A couple of triumphal arches are to form important items in the decorations. *Napoléon* undertakes to erect one of these while I officiate at the other. Many "hands" are pressed into the service, and a whole month is devoted to the work. My companion's arch is to form a painted imitation of marble architecture of the Doric order, with trophies, flags, and mottoes suitable to the occasion. Mine is to represent part of an old feudal castle in the Norman style, and stands fifty feet above the pavement. The contrast produced between these formidable-looking buildings, and the primitively constructed Cuban houses of one story, is singular enough, and fills the native negro with wonder. His excellency the captain-general approves of the elaborate preparations for his reception, and communicates favourably with his government upon the progress and prosperity of our part of the colony.

Perhaps our greatest professional achievement is the decoration of the interior of a chemist's shop. An enterprising *botecario* applies to us one day, and offers us a large amount to paint and adorn his new shop in what he terms the *Pompeian* style. We have the vaguest notions on that subject, but so have also the chemist and the Cuban critics. We accordingly undertake the work, and manufacture something in which the *Etruscan*, the *Rafaelesque*, the *Arabesque*, and the French wall paper equally participate. In the centre of the ceiling is to be placed a large allegorical oil-painting, representing a female figure of France in the act of crowning the bust of *Orfila*. In the four angles of the ceiling are to be painted portraits of the Spanish physician, the Marquis of *Joca*, the English chemist *Faraday*, the Italian anatomist *Paganucci*, and the French chemist *Velpeau*. It takes exactly seven months to carry out our design, in the execution whereof we are

assisted by the native talent already alluded to. Amongst our staff of operators are a couple of black white-washers for the broad work, a master carpenter with his apprentice for the carvings, and an indefatigable Chinese, whom we employ extensively for the elaborate pattern work.

The chief objects of attraction in this great undertaking are without doubt a pair of life-sized figures of two celebrated French chemists, named Parmentier and Vanquelin, destined to stand in a conspicuous part of the shop. As there are no sculptors in our town it devolves as usual upon the "followers of the divine art of Apelles" to try their hands at the art of Phidias. Confident of success, the chemist provides us with a couple of plaster busts, representing the French celebrities in question, and bids us do our best. The fragments of drapery exhibited on these gentlemen enable us to decide on the kind of costume which our figures should wear; the one being indicative of a robe somewhat clerical, and the other evincing without a doubt that the original belonged to a period when knee-breeches and top-boots were much in vogue. The resources of Cuba for the making of statues are limited, so the material we employ is slight. We construct our figures upon the principle on which paper masks are made, and by painting them afterwards in imitation of marble, a very solid appearance may be obtained. I will not describe the many difficulties which we encounter at every stage of this process; but when the hollow effigies are complete, and we have fixed them to their painted wooden plinths, we are vain enough to believe that we have produced as goodly a pair of sham statues as you would see if you travelled from one extremity of Cuba to the other.

It is the night which precedes the opening of the chemist's shop, and we have retired to our dormitories after giving a final coat of marble-colour to our paste-board productions. I am about to tumble into my hammock, when my progress is arrested by a strange sound which seems to emanate from an adjoining chamber. I re-ignite my extinguished lamp, and take a peep within the studio. Something is certainly moving in that apartment. I summon my companion, who joins me, and we enter our sanctum.

"Misericordia! One of the statues is alive," I exclaim, horrified at what appears to be a second edition of Frankenstein.

Monsieur Parmentier—he of the periwig

and top-boots—is sinking perceptibly, though gradually. We advance to save him, but, alas! too late; the worthy Frenchman is already on his bended boots. The wooden props which supported his hollow legs have given way, and his top-boots are now a shapeless mass. We pause for a moment to contemplate the wreck before us, and immediately set about repairing the damage.

But how? A brilliant idea suggests itself.

In a corner of the studio stand the leather originals which have served us as models for the extremities of the injured statue. These same boots belong to an obliging shoemaker who has lent them to us. But what of that? The case is urgent, and this is not a time to run after our friend and bargain with him for his property.

To fill the boots with plaster-of-paris, to humour them, while the plaster is yet wet, into something which resembles the human leg divine, is the work of a few moments. To fix them firmly to the wooden plinth, and prop over them the incomplete torso by means of laths cunningly concealed, occupies little more than an hour and a half. A coat of thick white paint administered below completes the operation, and Parmentier is erect again, and apparently none the worse for his disaster. One more layer of paint early next morning, and the statue is faultless, and ready for being borne triumphantly from our studio to its destination. There it is placed in its niche, and no one suspects the mishap. Evening approaches, and with it come crowds of Cuban dilettanti and others who have been invited for the occasion. The ceremony of blessing the new undertaking is now solemnised according to custom by a priest and an assistant, who sprinkle holy water from a small hand-broom upon everything and everybody, while a short prayer in Latin is chanted. Then the guests proceed to examine the various embellishments of this singular shop, pausing to refresh themselves from the sumptuous repast which the chemist has provided for his guests and patrons in an adjoining chamber.

The statues form a subject for wonder with everybody, and no one will believe that they are constructed of other than solid material. Even the incredulous, who are permitted to tap one of Parmentier's boots as a convincing test, cannot help sharing the popular delusion. But our friend the shoemaker is not so easily de-

ceived. From certain signs, known only to himself, he recognises in the statue's painted extremities his own appropriated goods. We swear him to secrecy, and offer to pay him liberally for the loss he has sustained; and it pleases him to discover that in the pursuit of the fine arts—and as regards statue-making in the West Indies, we echo the sentiment—there is nothing like leather!

A JULY TWILIGHT.

FALLS the gray mantle of the twilight soft
Upon the cottage thatch: the rose-elad porch
Is fragrant with the coming dews of eve,
And distantly there glimmer in the sky
Rich veined streaks of crimson and of gold,
That mark the bright track of the setting sun.
The sheep-bell tinkles from the distant hills,
Where the white flocks upon the clover wold
Are folded for the night.

From bosky dell
The sweet clear clarion of the nightingale
Sounds forth his vesper hymn. Dies slowly out
The last faint gleam of light; with mellow ray
The silver star of eve peeps palely through
The clusters of the sweet-breathed jessamine,
What time, her white blooms, to the dewdrops yield
Their fragrant incense.

Yonder from the lake
Falls on the ear the muffled plash of oar,
The deep refrain of fishers, as they sing,
And homeward row from toil. The white moth skims
The surface of the pool; the dun bat flies
Swift round the ivied tower; the barn-owl hoots
Along the hedgerows; and the bark of fox
Sounds from the blackthorn copse:

And one by one
The lights go out within the lattices;
Drawn are white curtains gently o'er the pane,
Sounds the last glad "Good-night," and simple folk
Commend them to their slumber and their God!

OLD STORIES RE-TOLD.

THE IRELAND FORGERIES.

In February, 1795 (ten years after the death of Doctor Johnson), the literary and dramatic world of London was convulsed by the news of the discovery of many important deeds and letters relating to Shakespeare. Malone, in his celebrated edition of the poet, published five years before, had introduced to the public much fresh material (of more or less proved authenticity) relative to the great genius, and the insatiable public, still hungry, was craving for more. It had been hitherto supposed that the fatal fire at the Globe Theatre (the poet's summer theatre in Southwark) had destroyed most of the manuscripts of his plays, and that all that was then left relating to the Swan of Avon had been swallowed up by the ruthless fire at Warwick, that burnt down the house of Doctor Hall, the husband of Susannah,

Shakespeare's favourite daughter. The joy and exultation were therefore all the greater; and in spite of the unaccountable incredulity of such great authorities as Malone, Steevens, and Isaac Reed, the eagerness to see and read the drift from the ocean of oblivion was extreme.

The lucky finder was S. W. H. Ireland, a clever young lawyer's clerk in New Inn, only eighteen years of age, the son of a Mr. S. Ireland, originally a Spitalfields weaver, who had turned seller of curiosities and writer of illustrated tours. He had, it appeared, met at a coffee-house a country gentleman, who, finding him curious in autographs, had taken him to his chambers, and given him leave to rummage over a heap of old deeds and papers, which had descended to him from his father, a lawyer who had retired on a fortune. The first lucky dive into the lumber-room brought up a pearl indeed, no less, in fact, than a lease from Shakespeare and John Heminge to Michael Fraser and Elizabeth his wife. The old curiosity seller, who had two years before travelled through Warwickshire, and had just published that tour, was in raptures, feeling sure there were more Shakespearian papers wherever that lease came from. He was right, there were dozens more. The young clerk had, indeed, struck what the miners call "a champion lode." The next find was a Profession of Faith by Shakespeare, Protestant to the last degree, and quite exploding the foolish tradition that he had died a Roman Catholic; next came a most charming good-natured letter of the great poet to Richard Cowley, the player, with a portrait in pen and ink of "the Bard" himself enclosed. After that appeared a note of hand and receipt from Heminge. Then followed a delightful love-letter from Shakespeare to Ann Hathaway, with some inestimable verses, and a price-less braided lock of his hair.

On being pressed by his father, the young clerk owned that a Mr. Talbot, then a clerk also in New Inn, since that an actor at the Dublin Theatre, had first introduced him to Mr. H., the gentleman who possessed the papers. The coffee-house story had been a mere playful fiction. After ransacking the closet several days, the two keen-eyed clerks had been lucky enough to discover a deed which secured to the owner of the deeds landed property, his title to which had previously been unknown. In gratitude for this, Mr. H. had given Talbot and Ireland all papers

and documents they should be lucky enough to find relating to Shakespeare. Mr. Talbot being written to by Ireland, senior, bore testimony to the truth of these curious facts, and explained with delightful frankness and candour the real reason why Mr. H. had so carefully concealed his name and address. Mr. H. was, it appeared, "a man somewhat known in the world and in the walk of high life." Shy and proud, he did not wish it known that an ancestor of his had been a brother actor with Shakespeare, who in a deed of gift still existing, and lately found, had left him all the furniture of a certain upper room in New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon, together with cups, a miniature of himself, also preserved, and various papers, the majority of which, alas! had been lost. The old curiosity seller was in raptures. Providence had thus permitted him to be the father of a lad who had discovered more Shakespearian papers than had ever yet been found. The mine seemed, indeed, inexhaustible as the faith of an antiquary. Soon there appeared a remarkable letter from Queen Elizabeth, requesting Shakespeare to come with his actors to Hampton and play before "my Lord Leicester," and to this most remarkable document was appended a loyal memorandum in the hand of Shakespeare.

After that the young diver brought home to Norfolk-street engraved portraits of Bassanio and Shylock, that had belonged to Shakespeare. But at this point these astounding disclosures assumed a still more interesting aspect. Considering everything, it was almost touching to think that this young zealot lover of Shakespeare should have struck a path that at last led him to traces of his own ancestors. Working among clouds of dust, he emerged one day dirty as a scavenger, but smiling, with a deed of gift of certain property in Blackfriars, from Shakespeare to a person named Ireland, who had saved him from drowning, a view of Ireland's house and coat-of-arms, and a greater treasure still, some tributary lines to W. H. from W. S., not strong verses, but still not more diluted than the occasion that produced them seemed to have warranted. After that the digger in this Goleonda discovered agreements between Shakespeare and John Louin and Henry Condell, the players, and manuscript notes in about fifty books. All that the world had been longing for, for a hundred and fifty years or so, seemed to pour from the cornucopia in shy Mr. H.'s lumber-closet.

In dust and grime the good fairy had hidden away and guarded the treasure, but the daring lawyer's clerk had at last blown his own trumpet and dissolved the enchantment. At last a corrected manuscript of King Lear was found, free from all the ribaldry foisted in by players and printers. The diver next fished up from "the slimy bottom of the deep" a few leaves of Hamlet, and still more glorious to relate, a play, a real unpublished play, founded, like Cymbeline, on fabulous ancient British history, and entitled Vortigern. There were also found a few leaves of a play entitled Henry the Second, and a deed alluding to a lost play of Shakespeare's, entitled Henry the Seventh.

In a state of almost hysterical rapture the old curiosity seller proceeded to publish the great Shakespearian find. The dreams of so many men had to him become a reality. It is true the keystone of the evidence was imperfect till shy Mr. H. should come forward; but this very break in the case freed his mind of all suspicion of fraud, for it was evident to the meanest understanding that no practised forgers would have left that part of their plot imperfect. The number and variety of papers removed all possibility that any one forger could have produced them. The chuckling old gentlemen therefore instantly constituted a committee of twenty-one literary men, including one or two noblemen, Doctor Parr, the great Whig divine, the celebrated Boswell, Pinkerton, Pye, the laureate, Valpy of Reading, the Reverend Nathanael Thornbury (grandfather of an author of the present day), and other celebrities of the day, to inspect the documents. The committee met three times, at No. 8, Norfolk-street, where the papers had been found, and each time the members were more rapturous than the last. At the first meeting, February, 1795, Boswell (who died in April, 1796), full of the new wonder, and as usual outdoing every one in his foolish admiration, previous to signing with the rest a certificate recording his belief, fell upon his knees, and in a tone of submission and exultation, vociferously thanked God that he had lived to witness the astounding discovery, and protested his readiness after that to depart in peace. Doctor Parr and Doctor Warton having heard Shakespeare's Profession of Faith read, exclaimed: "Mr. Ireland, we have very fine things in our church service, and our litany abounds with beauties, but here is a man has distanced us all."

At the next meeting, stammering, arrogant Doctor Parr declared, with his usual energy, that Mr. Boswell's certificate was far too feebly expressed for the importance of the subject, and at once dictated another, which he himself first signed. In March, 1796, another certificate was signed by twelve literary men, to testify that the Shakespearian deeds had been compared with Shakespeare's three signatures to his will, and to a deed in the hands of Mr. Albany Wallis, of 21, Norfolk-street, Garrick's executor, and that they all believed in their authenticity. In January of this year, young Ireland had drawn up a tempting schedule, in presence of Mr. Chalmers and another gentleman, of Shakespearian documents, which he solemnly protested he had seen. They were enough to make a bibliographer commit felony, and an antiquary break twice ten commandments. The list included the manuscripts of Richard the Second, Henry the Second (an unpublished early play) Henry the Fifth, sixty-two leaves of King John, forty-nine leaves of Othello, thirty-seven leaves of Richard the Third, thirty-seven leaves of Timon of Athens, fourteen leaves of Henry the Fourth, seven leaves of Julius Caesar, a catalogue of Shakespeare's books in his own manuscript, a deed of partnership in the Curtain Theatre, two drawings of the Globe Theatre, verses to Queen Elizabeth (only think!) verses to Sir Francis Drake (better still!), verses to Sir Walter Raleigh (best of all!), and his own miniature set in silver—silver! it ought to have been enormous diamonds! Other treasures Ireland had heard of, but had not yet seen. There were also a Chancer with manuscript notes, a book about Queen Elizabeth with ditto (all Golconda would not buy it), Euphuus with ditto, Bible with ditto (stupendous!), Boccaccio's works with ditto, Barclay's Ship of Fools (ah, indeed!) with ditto, Hollinshed's Chronicles with ditto (as we all expected); to crown this, discovery of discoveries, a whole length portrait (said to be of the Bard) in oil (said, why of course it was his, and hundreds of eager hands full of gold were stretching ready for it!), but better, grander still, a brief autobiography of Shakespeare in his own hand.

As the malice of Malone and the other opponents of the Ireland party continued still, however, strangely enough, to develop, and as Malone was said to have boasted that he had discovered the papers to be all forgeries, and was about to publish a conclusive work examining the whole evidence,

young Ireland, with very manly and chivalrous feeling, wished to publicly exculpate his father from all share in the great discovery. He drew up, therefore, a formal deposition to that effect on stamped paper, intending to swear it before a magistrate. This was a lawyer's clerk's natural way of proving a thing, but Mr. Albany Wallis, as a friend and a lawyer, disliking a formal deposition, drew up instead an advertisement, which was inserted, after the failure of Vortigern, in the True Briton, the Morning Herald, and other papers. It was signed S. W. H. Ireland, legally witnessed, and began thus:

"In justice to my father, and to remove the reproach under which he has innocently fallen respecting the papers published by him as the manuscripts of Shakespeare, I do hereby solemnly declare that they were given to him by me as the genuine productions of Shakespeare, and that he was and is at this moment totally unacquainted with the source from whence they came."

In April, 1796, Mr. Talbot wrote from Dublin, offering to join in an affidavit of the elder Ireland's innocence of any forgery, the secret "being only known to Sam, myself, and a third person, whom Mr. Ireland is not acquainted with." Mr. Talbot, in the same letter (thirteen days after the failure of Vortigern), protested against the younger Ireland's proposal of disclosing the secret to two gentlemen of respectability. "It would not be," he said, "consistent with our promise and oath." In the same month, nevertheless, Ireland, after much difficulty about selecting his confidants, chose Mr. Albany Wallis as the depositary of the mystery, so that Mr. Wallis might, as a professional man, assure Mr. H. that no part of his property would be damaged by the disclosure. The elder Ireland used reiterated importunities and most anxious solicitations, but Mr. Wallis kept close as a Freemason, his only reply was: "Do not ask me any questions. It is not proper that you should know the secret. Keep your mind easy, all will be well in time."

In the mean while all went bravely for the enterprising clerk only nineteen years old. Indeed, there was quite a competition among the London managers for Vortigern. Sheridan, who was a very lukewarm admirer of Shakespeare, and Harris, were both competitors for it. They neither of them cared a button probably whether the play was genuine or not; all they knew was that the town was wild to see it acted, and the cash

result must be gratifying. As for Kemble, who was a student of old plays, he was very gloomy and silent about Vortigern, and refused, in spite of young Ireland's request, to make any alterations whether he deemed them necessary or not. Porson had also seen the manuscripts, and refused to sign the Articles of Faith; Malone's strong disbelief no doubt influencing him. Nevertheless, Sheridan boldly made an agreement with Ireland to pay him down three hundred pounds, and after deducting the expenses of the theatre, to share the profits with him for sixty nights. That awful poet, Sir James Bland Burgess, wrote the prologue. On the 2nd of April, 1796, the rush of Shakespearians was so tremendous that not more than two or three women could force their way into the Drury Lane pit. It must be confessed, however, with all due deference to the Swan, that the play, on nearer acquaintance, was by no means equal to Cymbeline.

John Kemble, Bensley, Charles Kemble, King, Mrs. Powell, and Mrs. Jordan, did their best, but it was from the first too evidently an up-hill game. Vortigern murdered Constantius, became King of Britain, invited over the Saxons, defeated the Scots, fell in love with Rowena, and was fairly on his way to his last place of refuge in Cæsar's Tower after Rowena had poisoned herself, when the public would not have it—not another crumb of it—though there were yards more of flatulent blank verso to spout, and Aurelius had still to fight the hateful Vortigern, knock him down, take his crown, and spare his life. At the perhaps rather unfortunate line,

And when this solemn mockery is o'er,

which Kemble, being interrupted by a wolfish howl of vexation, contempt, and disappointment, somewhat maliciously repeated twice over, the house rose, and in a Niagara of indignation, swept the very early play of Shakespeare into everlasting forgetfulness. Immediately after this lamentable failure, when the Ireland family had shrunk from the theatre hot, astonished, and angry, dozens of critics detected in Vortigern plagiarisms from Shakespeare, and one keen eye found an allusion to "Bishop Bonner," which, to say the least, was a ridiculous anachronism. But the popular verdict did not shake the belief of Ireland's more generous friends, for Chalmers soon after published a defence eleven hundred pages long, and Ireland père wrote a vindication of his own conduct in an angry and contemptuous reply to that

"usurper," "dictator," and presumptuous, arrogant critic, Malone. Unfortunately the very month the father's pamphlet appeared, one written by the son was also printed by Debrett (opposite Burlington House, Piccadilly), acknowledging, with shameless frankness, every one of the extraordinary Shakespearian papers of the imaginary Mr. H. to be mere forgeries of his own.

Young Ireland had been well educated (according to his own account, at Kensington, Ealing, and Soho-square schools, afterwards at Amiens, and a college at Ems, in Normandy, and at sixteen had been articled to a lawyer of eminence in New Inn). The mistaken and vain lad, fond of books and accustomed to old plays, one day took it into his head that if he could pass off some documents of his own writing for Shakespeare's, it would secure him a reputation, delight his father, and show how easily credulous antiquaries could be gulled. Macpherson had led to Chatterton, Chatterton led to Ireland. Purchasing a thin quarto tract of the time of Elizabeth, with her arms on the cover, the lawyer's clerk, eager for this spurious kind of fame, wrote a letter in Elizabethan hand, supposed to be a letter presenting the book to the queen. This letter his father at once pronounced to be genuine. That very day, on his way home, Ireland called on a bookbinder named Laurie, in New Inn-passage, and showing him the letter, told him the story. A young man in the shop then showed him how to make ink look old, by mixing it with some acid and a liquid used in marbling book-covers, and afterwards turning it brown at the fire. In the next long vacation a visit to Stratford-upon-Avon further inflamed the young forger's mind, for at Clapton House the owner told him that a few weeks before, in clearing out a lumber-room to serve as an aviary for young partridges, he had found a whole basketful of old letters and papers, rotten as tinder, but many of them bearing the signature of Shakespeare, which he had burnt as mere litter and rubbish. On Ireland's return to New Inn, being left alone in chambers, he carried his impostures further, at first for mere frolic, keeping by him copies of the poet's signature from Stevens's Shakespeare. The wording of the sham deeds he took from an old Jacobean law paper. Here he had resolved to stop, but his first lies dragged him further down. His father insisted that he knew of more treasures, so did his dupes, and his own vanity and secretiveness urged him on. The paper he first used consisted of blank sheets torn from old books, but after

a time, hearing the jug spoken of as the prevalent Elizabethan water-mark, he selected sheets bearing that mark. Most of the old paper he purchased of Verey, a bookseller in Great May's-buildings, Saint Martin's-lane. Talbot became Ireland's accomplice, the forger tells us, by mere accident. He was also a clerk in New Inn, but at another lawyer's, and his articles had just expired. He had often seen Ireland imitate old handwritings, and at once told him that the first Shakespearian deed was not original. Ireland firmly denied the charge, but unfortunately, a few days after, Talbot, always on the watch, stole in and caught him writing a sham Shakespearian document. No longer able to deny the fact, Ireland forced him to secrecy, fearing the anger of his father, and Talbot, entering into the scheme, promised never to betray him. Not knowing of any extant autograph of Lord Southampton, Ireland invented a style, and wrote the earl's sham letter with his left hand. The praise lavished on his Profession of Faith by Parr and Warton first began to make him think he had original talent, and might carry the imposture further. Queen Elizabeth's letter Ireland wrote from her signature only, and this he copied from an original in the library at Norfolk-street. The drawings of Shylock and Bassanio were bought at a broker's in Butcher-row, and at New Inn, with water colours, he painted in the letters W. S., and the arms of Shakespeare, and gave the old Dutchman, whom he christened Shylock, his appropriate knife and scales. No one observed, however, that Ireland had made the spear in the coat of arms point the wrong way. Growing rapidly more daring, he next wrote alterations to King Lear, and he forged the playhouse receipts, which he tied round with threads unravelled from old tapestry. He now flew at higher game, and began to write, in detached portions, his play of Vortigern, pretending that the mysterious Mr. H. would not deliver the original manuscript till Ireland had transcribed the whole work. To his delight his dupes swallowed the whole two thousand lines, declaring they were superior to the worst of Shakespeare's plays, and much inferior to his best. For every separate forgery, Ireland had some artful motive. The Profession of Faith was intended to please all true Protestants; the corrections to Lear to show that the impurities of Shakespeare's plays were mere interpolations; the theatrical accounts were to prove the Swan's business habits; the story of Ireland saving the Bard from

drowning was to establish a claim to the papers, which he said Mr. H. assured him had belonged to one of his ancestors. So he went on piling lie upon lie. All this time this artful young impostor purposely appeared frequently in public, in order to induce the world to think him a giddy, thoughtless adolescent, incapable of producing such poems. Talbot, after much hesitation, consented to remain an accomplice and sort of sleeping partner in the fraud, and, by his letters to old Ireland, he helped on the scheme. It now became necessary, from time to time, to concoct more documents to strengthen the former evidence, and to win fresh praise from the still hungry literati. Still slowly but surely the time came when the lies could no longer live. The credulous father, urged by foolish dupes, determined that the world should no longer be deprived of such a treasure. He would publish the newly-found Shakespearian papers in spite of all the entreaties of his alarmed son. Vortigern appeared, Malone's crushing—no, that is not the word—pulverising exposure followed, and the imposture crumbled to pieces. The son (with some good in him) began to be seriously uneasy when the world commenced to dub his father an accomplice. Urged by his father, and pressed by the committee, young Ireland was at last compelled to tell Mr. Wallis the whole secret, and to beg him to be silent. At last, driven hopelessly into a corner, the clever young scamp, still vain of his triumph, while his father's vindication of himself and his reply to Malone were actually in the press, November, 1796, issued his Authentic Account of the Shakespearian Manuscripts, and, without waiting for Talbot's consent, as he had solemnly promised, at once avowed his imposture.

"I am myself," he wrote, "both the author and writer, and have had no aid or assistance from any soul living, and I never should have gone so far, but that the world praised the papers so much, and thereby flattered my vanity." And he concluded his pamphlet in the following manner;

"Here then I conclude, most sincerely regretting any offence I may have given the world or any particular individual, trusting at the same time they will deem the whole the act of a boy without any evil or bad intention, but hurried on, thoughtless of any danger that awaited to ensnare him. Should I attempt another play or any other stage performance, I shall hope the public will lay aside all prejudice my conduct may

have deserved, and grant me that kind indulgence which is the certain inmate of every Englishman's bosom."

The impudent imposture had continued for upwards of a year. The elder Ireland died five years afterwards, his end, as was generally supposed, hastened by shame and mortification at his son's forgeries. The son did not produce his promised Henry the Seventh, his interlude of the Virgin Queen, or his windy William the Conqueror, but afterwards published a novel and some rhapsodical and worthless poems, became editor of the York Herald, and died in 1835. That such poor forgeries as Ireland's should have required Malone's closely reasoned four hundred and twenty-four pages to expose them, does not say much, it must be confessed, for the knowledge of Elizabethan literature possessed by the contemporaries of Farmer, Steevens, and Isaac Reed.

It will now probably never be ascertained whether the father was an accomplice before or after the fact; but we are, nevertheless, by no means certain that he can be altogether acquitted. His Hogarthian memoranda were in too many cases proved to be spurious.

THE ROSE AND THE KEY.

CHAPTER LXVI. HER GRACE THE DUCHESS OF FALCONBURY.

In this pleasant green shade they had come to a standstill.

"Pretty creature," said this lady, in very sweet tones, "you are looking for somebody, I think. You have not been long here; I have not seen your face before. First, tell me who it is you want; I may be able to help you."

"Thank you very much; I have been looking everywhere for Lady Mardykes, and no one seems to know where she is."

"Oh! Lady Mardykes? You'll find her time enough. You are very young, dear; Lady Mardykes is a charming companion. But if you knew as much as I do of this curious world, you would hardly be in such a hurry to find her; you would wait with a great deal of patience until she found you."

The young lady looked in the face of her new acquaintance, who spoke so oddly of her hostess. That unknown friend laughed musically and softly, and looked very archly from the corners of her eyes, and nodded a little more gravely, as if to say, "Although I laugh I mean it seriously."

What she did say in continuation, was this:

"Come through this arch; there is a seat here that commands a very good view of the croquet-ground and the open walks. And what is your name, child?" she continued, as they walked side by side; "you are sweetly pretty; but by no means so pretty as I."

This little qualification Maud, of course, accepted as a pleasantry, which yet might be quite true, for this lady, although by no means so young as she, was extremely pretty.

"You, now, begin by telling me who you are," said this lady, taking her place on the rustic seat, to which she had led the way, and pointing with her parasol to Maud, invited her to sit down also, "and then you shall hear everything about me."

"My name," said Maud, "is Vernon, my mamma is Lady Vernon; we live at Roydon, a little more than forty miles from this."

"Indeed! Lady Vernon, of Roydon? We ought to know one another then. I knew your mamma at one time, when I was a very young girl; it is twelve years ago. You have heard her speak of me, the Duchess of Falconbury. My greatest misfortune overtook me very early."

She turned away, and sighed deeply.

Maud had heard of that lady's bereavement. It had been a marriage of love. The young duke died in the second year of what promised to be a perfectly happy union, and the beautiful dowager had refused to listen to any solicitations to change her widowed state ever since.

"I like your face, I love your voice, which, for me, has a greater charm than even the features," said the duchess. And she placed her hand on Maud's as it lay upon the seat, and looked for a moment earnestly in her face. "Yes, we shall be very good friends; I can trust you; I ought to trust you, for, otherwise, I cannot warn you."

"Warn me?" repeated Maud.

"Yes, warn you. I see you looking round again for Lady Mardykes."

"I don't see her anywhere," said Maud.

"So much the better," said the duchess, this time with a little shudder.

Maud looked at her. But her dark look was but the shadow of a passing cloud. The sunshine of her smile immediately succeeded, and was soon darkened again.

"For five years a miserable secret has lain heavy at my heart; I breathed it but once, and then to a person who visited me

under circumstances so strange, that I scarcely know whether he is of this world or of the next. Can you keep a secret? Will you, while you live?" she whispered, drawing nearer to Maud.

I wonder whether priests and physicians, who have so many secrets thrust upon them, in the way of their trade, have any curiosity left for those which fortune may throw in their way? But people who enjoy no such professional obligations and opportunities, have for the most part a large and accommodating appetite for all such mental aliment.

Maud looked for a moment in the pretty face which had so suddenly grown pale and thoughtful, and with hardly a hesitation she accepted the proffered trust.

"You like Lady Mardykes?" asks the duchess.

"Extremely—all I know of her."

"Well said. Well guarded—'all you know of her.' You shall know more of her before you leave me. She is a pretty woman still, but, of course, *passée*. When I knew her first she was beautiful; how beautiful you could not now believe. But always something, to my sense, funeste; a beautiful flower dedicated to death. Yet she seemed the analogy of some exquisite and wonderful flower that grows somewhere in dreamland, in enchanted gardens, where you will, but always in shade, never in light. Her face was beautiful, gentle, melancholy, but, to my eye, baleful. I should have liked to have held my parasol between it and me. Do you understand that feeling? Those flowers are associated in my mind with a poison that blasts the very air."

"An odd guest," thought Maud, "to speak so of her entertainer."

"You think it strange," said the duchess, oddly echoing Maud's thoughts, "that I should speak so of Lady Mardykes. You shall hear and judge."

This lady spoke, I may parenthetically mention, in a particularly low, sweet voice, and with a curious fluency, which, if one had only heard without seeing her, would have led one to suppose that she was reading a written composition rather than talking in colloquial English. She continued thus:

"You know her. She is very winning and gentle; she is, or was, one of the most fascinating persons I ever met. She is radiant with the beauty of candour. Her expression is soft and quite angelic; and she, among all living women, possesses the blackest heart and is capable of the most enormous crimes."

As she murmured these words, the lady,

with a dismal gaze in her face, pressed her hand on Maud's wrist.

"You can't believe that I am serious," said the duchess. "I'll convince you. You think it odd I should know her and meet her. I'll convince you in a way you little expect. The days of detection are marked in this little red book. No one reads it but myself, and that only for a date." She showed a little book about two inches square, bound in scarlet leather. "I'm talking to you in an unknown tongue; you will understand me perfectly another time," she continued, a little embarrassed. "I'll tell you at present enough to justify what I have said of her. I am fettered and she is fettered. You cannot yet understand that; and, as sometimes happens, from the first moment we met there was a mutual embarrassment, that is, mutual fear and dislike; even more, mutual horror and antipathy, the reasons of which depend on— Well, by-and-bye I may speak of it again; but for the present we let that pass. There is the cause of my permitting her to live, and of her permitting me to live. Those are strong terms, but true. Listen. I make no half-confidences. She liked my dear husband before his marriage. Gentle and soft as she looks, she is an ambitious and daring woman. He suspected nothing of it. She loved him passionately, and in proportion as jealousy began to infuse itself into it, that passion became atrocious. Here is the secret. Sit closer to me. My husband died by the hand of a poisoner; and that hand was afterwards directed against my life."

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed Maud, feeling as if she were still in a horrible dream.

"Hush! Dear child, it is of the last importance that no human being should suspect that I have imparted a secret to you. Your life would be practised upon immediately, and the ultimate vindication of justice be defeated. You shall know, by-and-bye, the curious circumstances which, for a time, prevent the sword from descending upon Lady Mardykes, and which, although she knows that a movement of my finger may bring it down, yet compel her to tolerate my existence, and constrain both to live on mutual terms of exterior friendliness. Do you see that man coming toward us?"

"Doctor Antomarchi?" said Maud.

CHAPTER LXVII. MAUD CHANGES HER ROOMS.

DOCTOR ANTOMARCHI was walking slowly in that direction, with his eye upon them.

"I see you know him. He is a very

particular friend, and has been for many years, of Lady Mardykes. I never smell any perfume, no, not even a flower, that he presents. You will do wisely to follow my example. Lady Mardvkes chooses her instruments astutely. See how he watches us. Let us get up; he will think, if we seem so absorbed, that we are talking of that which—might not please him."

The duchess rose as she spoke, and Maud with her.

Could Maud Vernon credit one particle of the shocking melodrama she had just been listening to? One thing was certain: her new friend had not been mystifying her. Her colour came and went as she told her story, and the expression was too genuinely that of a person pursued by an agitating and horrible recollection to be counterfeited.

"You can't believe all this?" resumed the duchess. "I shall be here for a walk at eleven in the morning; meet me, and we shall have another talk. Till then, upon this subject we are mute."

Antomarchi was now near. To the duchess he made a very ceremonious bow, and one not quite so profound to Miss Vernon.

"Oh, Doctor Antomarchi," said the duchess, loftily, drawing up, "can you tell us where Lady Mardykes is? Miss Vernon has been looking for her."

"I believe, your grace, she is not likely to see her this evening; Lady Mardykes has been called away. But she will certainly be here again in the morning."

Doctor Antomarchi had to address the conclusion of this speech to Maud only, for the Duchess of Falconbury turned her head away with an air of scarcely concealed disdain, which implied very pointedly how exclusively in the interest of her companion her inquiry respecting Lady Mardykes had been made.

"And can you tell me," said Maud, "whether Miss Medwyn has arrived, or how soon she is expected?"

"I know that Miss Medwyn has not come; I do not know when she may come; but certainly she is not expected to-day," he answered. "I think, Miss Vernon, I need scarcely ask you whether you feel a good deal knocked up to-day?"

"I am a little tired."

"And a little nervous?"

"I slept so little last night, and went to bed rather tired, and I really do think there is nothing else."

"Well, you must consent to remain perfectly quiet for the remainder of the after-

noon, and get to bed before ten to-night, and to-morrow you will be quite yourself. You are more tired, and your nerves more shaken, than you suppose. You may bring on an attack of illness else."

"But if Lady Mardykes should come to-night I should like so much to be ready to go down."

"She will not be here to-night, assure yourself of that. Or I'll put it, if you please, in a way you may like better. If she does come to-night I undertake that she will certainly pay you a visit in your room, the very first thing she does."

"That is very good of Doctor Antomarchi," said the duchess, with a satirical smile on her lips, and irony in her tone. "I shall be going out for a drive after luncheon, so I suppose, dear, I shan't see you, unless Doctor Antomarchi should give leave, again to-day, but to-morrow we shall meet, and I think till then I shall say good-bye."

She nodded prettily to Maud, and smiled lingeringly over her shoulder as she turned away and re-entered the shady walk from which they had lately emerged together.

Doctor Antomarchi, although not included in the lady's leave-taking, took off his hat with another ceremonious bow, and at the same moment a servant stationed on the terrace began to ring a bell.

"That is the luncheon-bell," said the doctor.

The polite company assembled on the croquet-ground threw down their mallets at sound of it, and they and all the loiterers on the walks, and among the flowers, began to troop toward the door through which she had entered, and in a very short time this pretty quadrangle was nearly emptied, while, more slowly, Doctor Antomarchi walking by her side, they two moved in the same direction.

Maud did feel a little, indeed a good deal, tired, and this, together with the dispiriting absence of her hostess, and the agitating stories, false she was certain, communicated by her fanciful new friend, the duchess, predisposed her to adopt Antomarchi's advice.

Maud found Mercy Creswell awaiting her in the passage. She ducked a little curtsy, with a face of awe, to Doctor Antomarchi as he passed her; and then told her young mistress that "she had been moved to much more beautifuller rooms."

On reaching them, under Mercy Creswell's guidance, she found that they were next the suite which she had occupied

on the night before, but at the near side of that strong door which seemed to form a very marked boundary in the house.

They consisted of four rooms, a bedroom, a dressing-room adjoining it, and a sitting-room beyond that; there was also a narrow room for her maid, with a door of communication with the young lady's room, and another opening on the passage.

Nothing could have been devised more charming than the taste in which the rooms, intended for Miss Vernon's use, were furnished and got up. If they had been prepared by some wealthy vassal for the reception of a royal visitor, they could not have been more elegant, and even magnificent. Who could have fancied that these bare, gloomy corridors led to anything so gorgeous and refined? Maud looked round, smiling with surprise and pleasure.

"They was only finished this morning, miss," said Mercy, also turning round slowly, with a fat smile of complacency, for she participated in the distinction.

"Was all this done for me?" Maud inquired at last.

"Every bit, miss," rejoined her maid.

"How extremely kind! What taste! What beautiful combinations of colour!"

Maud ran on in inexhaustible admiration for some time, examining now, bit by bit, the details of her sitting-room.

"Lady Mardykes will be here to-morrow morning," said Maud, at last; "it really will be a relief to me to thank her. I hardly know what to say."

Her eloquence was interrupted by the arrival of luncheon, served on beautiful china and silver.

When she had had her luncheon, she began to question Mercy about the people whom she had seen in the croquet-ground under the windows.

"Do you know the appearance of the Spanish minister?" she asked.

"Spanish ambassador? Oh! La, yes, miss. Don Ferdnando Tights they calls him in the servants' hall."

"What kind of person is he?"

"Well, he's a quiet creature; there's no harm in him, only, they say, he is woundy proud."

"That is pretty plain. And the Duchess of Falconbury? She was talking to me a good deal of Lady Mardykes. Are they good friends?"

"Oh! bless you, that's a troublesome one. Never a good word for no one has she. I would not advise no one that's here to make a companion of that lass; she has got many a light head into trouble, not

that there's nothing dangerous about her, only this, that she is always a-trying to make mischief."

"That is a good deal, however. Do you mean that she tells untruths?"

"Well, no; I do believe she really half thinks what she says, but her head is always running on mischief, and that's the sort she is."

"How do you mean that she has got people into trouble?"

"Well, I mean by putting mischievous thoughts in their heads, you see, and breeding doubt and ill-will."

"Do you recollect any particular thing she said, of that kind?" asked Maud, curiously.

"Not I, miss. Ho! bless you, miss, she'd talk faster than the river runs, or the mill turns. That's the sort she is with her airs and her grandeur, fit to burst with pride."

Miss Vernon was pleased at this testimony to the dubious nature of this great lady's scandal. A mist, however, not quite comfortable, still remained. She wished very much that she had never heard her stories.

Maud had still a slight flicker of her nervous headache, and was really tired besides, and not sorry of an excuse to spend the rest of the day quietly with her pleasant books and music, for a piano had been placed in her sitting-room, now and then relieved by so much of Mercy Creswell's gossip as she cared to call for, and, in this way, before she was well aware, the curtain of night descended upon her first day.

CHAPTER LXVIII. THE THIEF.

It was past nine o'clock next morning, notwithstanding her resolution to be up and stirring early, when Maud got up.

Lady Mardykes was expected, as we know, to arrive that morning; and Maud peeped often from the window, as she sat at her dressing-table near it.

In her dressing-gown and slippers, she went into the sitting-room on hearing the maid arrive with her breakfast things.

"Can you tell me," asked Maud, "whether Lady Mardykes has arrived?"

"Please 'm, is that the lady that is coming from——"

"No matter where she's coming from," interrupted Mercy Creswell, sharply; "it is Lady Mardykes, the lady that came yesterday, and is expected again this morning. She's a new servant, not a week in the house," says the femme de chambre to

Maud, in a hasty aside. "I think you might know whether her ladyship's harried or no," and she darted at the maid a look black as thunder.

"Yes'm, I'm quite new here, please. I don't half know the ways of the 'ouse yet. I was 'ired by——"

"Don't you mind who you was 'ired by. I'll make out all about it, miss, myself, if you please, just now," again interposed Mercy.

And before she had time to reflect upon this odd dialogue between the maids, Miss Vernon's attention was pleasantly engaged by satisfactory evidence on the subject of her inquiry, for she saw Lady Mardykes enter the now quiet croquet-ground from the further side, in company with Automarchi. Except for these two figures the large quadrangle was deserted.

Automarchi was speaking earnestly to her; she was looking down upon the walk. The distance was too great to read faces at; but Maud saw Lady Mardykes apply her handkerchief once or twice to her eyes. She was evidently weeping.

Her father had not died. Her dress was as brilliant as good taste would allow, and the morning paper said that there were no longer any grounds for uneasiness about him. Had Maud's eye accidentally lighted on a scene? Was this strange, and as she thought, repulsive man, urging his suit upon this lady over whom he had succeeded, possibly, in establishing a mysterious influence?

Lady Mardykes glanced up suddenly towards this long line of windows, as if suddenly recollecting that she may be observed.

Then she walked with more of her accustomed air; and she and Automarchi crossing the grass-plot, ascended the broad flight of steps that scale the terrace, at its middle point, exactly opposite to the door in the side of the house, nearly under Maud's window. Through this door they entered the house, and Miss Vernon, for the present, lost sight of them.

On the breakfast table lay the Morning Post, where, among other interesting pieces of news, she read: "Lady Mardykes is at present entertaining a distinguished circle of friends at Carsbrook;" and then followed a selection from the names. Her interest more than revived as she read this long list of names, containing so much that was distinguished. There was one omission. The Honourable Charles Marston did not figure with other honourables in the list. But that list was but a selection,

and Charles Marston had not yet made his mark in the world, and might easily be omitted, and be at Carsbrook, notwithstanding.

She would not ask Mercy Creswell; for she did not choose Lady Vernon to hear anything that might awake her suspicions. And that reserved and prevaricating *femme de chambre* had written, she knew, the day before, to Lady Vernon, and considered herself as in *her* employment, and not in Maud's. It behoved her, therefore, to be very much on her guard in talking to that person.

Maud never found Mercy Creswell so slow and clumsy in assisting at her toilet as this morning. There was very little to be done to equip her for her ramble in the croquet-ground; but that little was retarded by so many blunders, that Maud first laughed, and then stared and wondered.

She saw Mercy Creswell frequently look at her big watch, and not until after she had successfully repeated it pretty often, did she perceive that this sly young woman was pointing out to her in the quadrangle below, which was now beginning to fill, persons, and little incidents in succession, which tempted her again and again to look from the window, and delayed her. All this time the *femme de chambre*, affecting to laugh with her young mistress, and to be highly interested in the doings of the croquet-ground, was plainly thinking with some anxiety of something totally different, and watching the lapse of the minutes whenever she thought she could, unobserved, consult her watch.

Maud looking in the glass, saw her do this, with an anxious face, and then hold it to her ear, doubtful if it were going, time seemed, I suppose, to creep so slowly.

Why was it that this maid, this agent of her mother's, seemed always occupied about something different from what she pretended to be about, and to have always something to conceal?

Another delay arose about the young lady's boots. Her maid had put them out of her hand, she could not for the life of her remember where.

"It seems to me, Mercy, you have made up your mind not to let me out until your watch says I may go; so unless you find them in a minute more, I shall walk out in my slippers."

As the young lady half in jest said this, the great clock of the old house, which is fixed in that side of it that overlooks the croquet-ground, struck eleven. And the clang of its bell seemed to act like

magic upon Mercy Creswell, for she instantly found the boots, and in a minute or two more had done all that was required of her, and her young mistress went out, full of excited expectation, and not a little curious to observe more closely the odd relations of confidence and sympathy which seemed to have established themselves between the wealthy lady of Carsbrook and the clever foreign adventurer who had, she fancied, marked her for his own.

The gallery that passes her door is a very long one, and exactly as she entered it from her dressing-room, there emerged from a side-door near the further extremity, to her great surprise, two persons, whom she saw to be Lady Mardykes and Doctor Antomarchi. The lady stepped out quickly; their way lay toward the head of the stairs. They were in low and earnest conversation, and plainly had not seen her.

Lady Mardykes walked with a quick and agitated step, intending, it seemed, to avoid observation. Had it been otherwise, Maud would have run to overtake her. What was she to think?

She would try to keep Lady Mardykes in sight, and when she got down-stairs there would be no awkwardness in speaking to her.

Lady Mardykes and Antomarchi had but just appeared, and Maud had hardly made two steps toward them from her door, when Mercy Creswell peeped out.

"Lord! There's her ladyship!" gasped the maid in unaccountable consternation, and with a stamp on the floor she called to her young mistress, still in a suppressed voice, as she tried to catch her dress in her hand. "Come back, miss, you must not follow her ladyship. It's as much as my place is worth if you do."

"What on earth do you mean? What can you mean?" said Maud, turning towards her for a moment in astonishment. "I'm going down-stairs, I'm going to the croquet-ground. Go back to my room, please, and wait for me there."

The *femme de chambre* glared on her irresolutely, with her finger-tips to her underlip, and the other hand extended in the attitude in which she had grasped with it at the lady's dress. Suddenly she drew back a step, with a look a little demure and frightened, and dropping a short curtsy, she dived back into the room again.

This woman, to whose care Lady Vernon had consigned her toilet, was becoming more and more unaccountable and unpleasant every day. But there were subjects of curiosity that piqued her too

nearly to allow the image of Mercy Creswell a place in her thoughts just now.

As she moved along the gallery, she saw the door, through which Lady Mardykes and Antomarchi had just passed, open, and a man's head and part of his figure protruded; it was only for a moment while he dropped a black leather bag at the side of the door next the stairs, and then withdrew, closing but not quite shutting the door; but she had no difficulty in recognising the peculiar countenance of Mr. Darkdale.

As she passed she heard a voice she recognised. It was the same she had heard from the carriage that passed them in the pine-wood on the night of her journey, and which, allowing for the hoarseness produced by shouting, so nearly resembled that of Captain Vivian.

"Imprisoned by Lady Mardykes, you know as well as I, I can't get away, no one ever can from this house: I shall never leave this room alive——"

These odd words reached her, and the door was shut, as they were rapidly spoken. It was not the voice of an angry man. It was spoken in a tone of utter despondency. Some people, however, have an exaggerated way of talking; and this was not worth a great deal.

Maud knew her way to the great staircase perfectly now. As she went down she met the Duchess of Falconbury coming up. This great lady was dressed, as usual, in very elegant taste, and looked quite charming. She stopped at the landing where she met Maud.

"So I have found my friend at last. Come to my arms, my long lost swain!" she exclaimed, and smiling placed her arms about her neck and kissed her, before Maud had well time to be even astonished. The duchess laughed a little silvery laugh. "I really began to fear I was never to see you again, and I have so much to tell you. So much *more*," she whispered, "and you don't know what it is to have a confidence to make, and no one with either honour or sympathy to hear it; and that was my sad case, until I met you. I forgot my watch in its case on my dressing-table. I don't mind sending; I go myself. I lock up everything," she said in a still lower whisper, and held up a little ornate key, and she added significantly, "you had better do so, while you remain here. I used to lose something or other every day till I took that precaution; they steal all my penknives and scissors. Where are you going now?"

"I'm trying to find a friend." (She did

not care to mention Lady Mardykes particularly, as her name might easily set the duchess off upon one of her "hominies," as they call such stories in the north country.) "I think I shall have no difficulty in finding her."

"And then? Where shall I look for you?"

"I suppose I shall go where every one seems to go, here, to the croquet-ground."

"Yes—the croquet-ground, that will do very nicely, and I will meet you there."

She nodded, and smiled over her shoulder as she ran up the stairs, and Maud ran down, in hopes of recovering Lady Mardykes's track, but, for the time, she had effectually lost sight of her.

There was no footman at this moment in the hall near the stairs. The servant who was at the hall-door had not seen her. She had probably taken the way to the croquet-ground, the general muster before luncheon.

She made a wrong turn in threading the long passages, and found herself at the door of the odd, oval room in which her interview with Doctor Antomarchi, on the night of her arrival, had taken place.

The door was a little open. It occurred to her that possibly Lady Mardykes might be there. She tapped at the door. There was no answer; she pushed it more, opened it, and stepped in.

This room had a peculiar character, as I have said. Something sternly official and mysterious. It might be the first audience-chamber, in a series, in the Inquisition. Maud looked about her. She was alone.

On the massive table I have mentioned, near the large desk which stood at one end of it, was spread a square piece of letter-paper, on which were laid, side by side, three trifling toys, of very little collective value, but which at once riveted the attention of Miss Vernon.

She stooped over them; there could be no doubt as to their identity. There was the tiny paper-cutter she had missed, with its one little steel blade in the handle. There were the scissors with the gold mounting of her dressing-case, from which they had been stolen, and there, finally, a little penknife, also stolen from her dressing-case, but which she had not missed. The pretty little penknife had her monogram, M. G. V., upon it. The paper-knife had this, and the device of the Rose and the Key beside; and about the scissors there could be no doubt whatever. If there

had been any it would have been removed by a memorandum written in a clear, masculine hand, upon the sheet of paper on which they lay.

It was simply these words:

Septm. —th, 1864.

Miss Vernon.

Roydon Hall.

See K. L. L., vol iii., folio 378.

Three articles; viz. scissors, paper-cutter, penknife.

Questionable.

"Questionable! What can he mean? Is this a piece of insolence of that foreigner, about whom Lady Mardykes appears infatuated? Questionable? What on earth can he mean or suspect?"

Her first impulse was to seize her own property, and the paper, and bring the whole thing before Lady Mardykes. But her more dignified instincts told her differently. She would leave these stolen trifles where they were, and mention the discovery, perhaps, after consultation with her cousin Maximilla, whom she was sure to see in a day or two.

Maud turned about now, and walked out of the door, almost hoping to meet Doctor Antomarchi. She did not; for he returned through another door, and too late discovered his oversight. But he little suspected that Miss Vernon had herself visited the room, and by a perverse accident had seen and recognised her missing property. He glanced jealously round the room, with eyes that, whenever he was roused, became wild and burning.

"Strange forgetfulness! But nothing has been stirred. That dear Lady Mardykes, she is so excitable! One can't avoid being disturbed."

He shut the door sharply, opened a large cabinet, and popped these trophies of larceny into one of a multitude of pigeon-holes.

"What will Damian say? What will Damian think? He's past the age of thinking against a hard head like this," and he tapped his square forehead with his pencil-case, smiling and musing.

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EFFECTUAL AID IN CASES OF INDIGESTION
AND ALL STOMACH COMPLAINTS,

AND, AS A NATURAL CONSEQUENCE,
A PURIFIER OF THE BLOOD, & SWEETENER OF THE WHOLE SYSTEM.

INDIGESTION is a weakness or want of power of the digestive juices in the stomach to convert what we eat and drink into healthy matter, for the proper nourishment of the whole system. It is caused by everything which weakens the system in general, or the stomach in particular. From it proceed nearly all the diseases to which we are liable; for it is very certain, that if we could always keep the stomach right we should only die by old age or accident. Indigestion produces a great variety of unpleasant sensations; amongst the most prominent of its miserable effects are a want of, or an inordinate appetite, sometimes attended with a constant craving for drink, a distension or feeling of enlargement of the stomach, flatulency, heartburn, pain in the stomach, acidity, unpleasant taste in the mouth, perhaps sickness, rumbling noise in the bowels: in some cases of depraved digestion there is nearly a complete disrelish for food, but still the appetite is not greatly impaired, as at the stated period of meals persons so afflicted can eat heartily, although without much gratification; along train of nervous symptoms are also frequent attendants, general debility, great languidness, and incapacity for exertion. The minds of persons so afflicted frequently become irritable and desponding, and great anxiety is observable in the countenance; they appear thoughtful, melancholy, and dejected, under great apprehension of some imaginary danger, will start at any unexpected noise or occurrence, and become so agitated that they require some time to calm and collect themselves; yet for

all this the mind is exhilarated without much difficulty; pleasing events, society, will for a time dissipate all appearance of disease; but the excitement produced by an agreeable change vanishes soon after the cause has gone by. Other symptoms are, violent palpitations, restlessness, the sleep disturbed by frightful dreams and startings, and affording little or no refreshment; occasionally there is much moaning, with a sense of weight and oppression upon the chest, nightmare, &c.

It is almost impossible to enumerate all the symptoms of this first invader upon the constitution, as in a hundred cases of *Indigestion* there will probably be something peculiar to each; but be they what they may, they are all occasioned by the food becoming a burden rather than a support to the stomach; and in all its stages the medicine most wanted is that which will afford speedy and effectual assistance to the digestive organs, and give energy to the nervous and muscular systems—nothing can more speedily, or with more certainty, effect so desirable an object than *Norton's Extract of Camomile Flowers*. The herb has from time immemorial been highly esteemed in England as a grateful anodyne, imparting an aromatic bitter to the taste, and a pleasing degree of warmth and strength to the stomach; and in all cases of indigestion, gout in the stomach, windy colic, and general weakness, it has for ages been strongly recommended by the most eminent practitioners as very useful and beneficial. The great, indeed only, objection to its use has been the large quantity of water which it

takes to dissolve a small part of the flowers and which must be taken with it into the stomach. It requires a quarter of a pint of boiling water to dissolve the soluble portion of one drachm of Camomile Flowers; and, when one or even two ounces may be taken with advantage, it must at once be seen how impossible it is to take a proper dose of this wholesome herb in the form of tea; and the only reason why it has not long since been placed the very first in rank of all restorative medicines is, that in taking it the stomach has always been loaded with water which tends in a great measure to counteract, and very frequently wholly to destroy the effect. It must be evident that loading a weak stomach with a large quantity of water, merely for the purpose of conveying into it a small quantity of medicine must be injurious; and that the medicine must possess powerful renovating properties only to counteract the bad effects likely to be produced by the water. Generally speaking, this has been the case with Camomile Flowers, a herb possessing the highest restorative qualities, and when properly taken, decidedly the most speedy restorer, and the most certain preserver of health.

NORTON'S CAMOMILE PILLS are prepared by a peculiar process, accidentally discovered, and known only to the proprietor, and which he firmly believes to be one of the most valuable modern discoveries in medicine, by which all the essential and extractive matter of more than an ounce of the flowers is concentrated in four moderate-sized pills. Experience has afforded the most ample proof that they possess all the fine aromatic and stomachic properties for which the herb has been esteemed; and, as they are taken into the stomach unencumbered by any diluting or indigestible substance, in the same degree has their benefit been more immediate and decided. Mild in their operation and pleasant in their effect, they may be taken at any age, and under any circumstance, without danger or inconvenience. A person exposed to cold and wet a whole day or night could not possibly receive any injury from taking them, but, on the contrary, they would effectually prevent a cold being taken. After a long acquaintance with and strict observance of the medicinal properties of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, it is only doing them justice to say, that they are really the

most valuable of all TONIC MEDICINES. By the word tonic is meant a medicine which gives strength to the stomach sufficient to digest in proper quantities all wholesome food, which increases the power of every nerve and muscle of the human body, or, in other words, invigorates the nervous and muscular systems. The solidity or firmness of the whole tissue of the body, which so quickly follows the use of *Norton's Camomile Pills*, their certain and speedy effects in repairing the partial dilapidations from time or intemperance, and their lasting salutary influence on the whole frame, is most convincing, that in the smallest compass is contained the largest quantity of the tonic principle, of so peculiar a nature as to pervade the whole system, through which it diffuses health and strength sufficient to resist the formation of disease, and also to fortify the constitution against contagion; as such, their general use is strongly recommended as a preventative during the prevalence of malignant fever or other infectious diseases, and to persons attending sick rooms they are invaluable, as in no one instance have they ever failed in preventing the taking of illness, even under the most trying circumstances.

As *Norton's Camomile Pills* are particularly recommended for all stomach complaints or indigestion, it will probably be expected that some advice should be given respecting diet, though after all that has been written upon the subject, after the publication of volume upon volume, after the country has, as it were, been inundated with practical essays on diet, as a means of prolonging life, it would be unnecessary to say more. did we not feel it our duty to make the humble endeavour of inducing the public to regard them not, but to adopt that course which is dictated by nature, by reason, and by common sense. Those persons who study the wholesomes, and are governed by the opinion of writers on diet, are uniformly both unhealthy in body and weak in mind. There can be no doubt that the palate is designed to inform us what is proper for the stomach, and of course that must best instruct us what food to take and what to avoid: we want no other adviser. Nothing can be more clear than that those articles which are agreeable to the taste were by nature intended for our food and sustenance, whether liquid or solid, foreign or of native

production: if they are pure and unadulterated, no harm need be dreaded by their use; they will only injure by abuse. Consequently, whatever the palate approves, eat and drink always in moderation, but never in excess; keeping in mind that the first process of digestion is performed in the mouth, the second in the stomach; and, that, in order that the stomach may be able to do its work properly, it is requisite the first process should be well performed; this consists in masticating or chewing the solid food, so as to break down and separate the fibres and small substances of meat and vegetable, mixing them well, and blending the whole together before they are swallowed; and it is particularly urged upon all to take plenty of time to their meals and never eat in haste. If you conform to this short and simple, but comprehensive advice, and find that there are various things which others eat and drink with pleasure and without inconvenience, and which would be pleasant to yourself only that they disagree, you may at once conclude that the fault is in the stomach, that it does not possess the power which it ought to do, that it wants assistance, and the sooner that assistance is afforded the better. A very short trial of this medicine will best prove how soon it will put the stomach in a condition to perform with ease all the work which nature intended for it. By its use you will soon be able to enjoy, in moderation, whatever is agreeable to the taste, and unable to name one individual article of food which disagrees with or sits unpleasantly on the stomach. Never forget that a small meal well digested affords more nourishment to the system than a large one, even of the same food, when digested imperfectly. Let the dish be ever so delicious, ever so enticing, a variety offered, the bottle ever so enchanting, never forget that temperance tends to preserve health, and that health is the soul of enjoyment. But should an impropriety be at any time, or ever so often committed, by which the stomach becomes overloaded or disordered, render it immediate aid by taking a dose of Norton's

Camomile Pills, which will so promptly assist in carrying off the burden thus imposed upon it that all will soon be right again.

It is most certainly true that every person in his lifetime consumes a quantity of noxious matter, which if taken at one meal would be fatal: it is these small quantities of noxious matter, which are introduced into our food, either by accident or wilful adulteration, which we find so often upset the stomach, and not unfrequently lay the foundation of illness, and perhaps final ruination to health. To preserve the constitution, it should be our constant care, if possible, to counteract the effect of these small quantities of unwholesome matter; and whenever, in that way, an enemy to the constitution finds its way into the stomach, a friend should immediately be sent after it, which would prevent its mischievous effects, and expel it altogether; no better friend can be found—no, none which will perform the task with greater certainty than NORTON'S CAMOMILE PILLS. And let it be observed that the longer this medicine is taken the less it will be wanted, and it can in no case become habitual, as its entire action is to give energy and force to the stomach, which is the spring of life, the source from which the whole frame draws its succour and support. After an excess of eating or drinking, and upon every occasion of the general health being at all disturbed, these PILLS should be immediately taken, as they will stop and eradicate disease at its commencement. Indeed, it is most confidently asserted, that by the timely use of this medicine only, and a common degree of caution, any person may enjoy all the comforts within his reach, may pass through life without an illness, and with the certainty of attaining a healthy OLD AGE.

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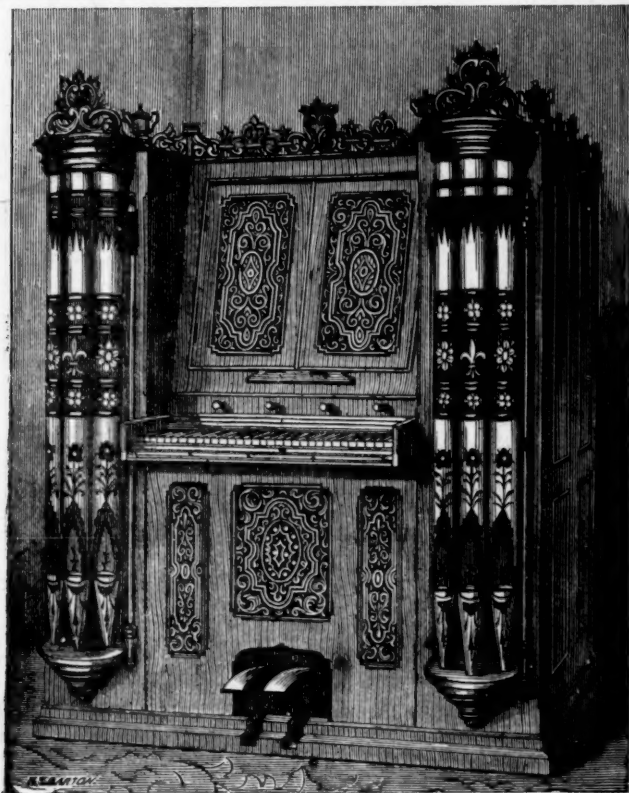
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